

Friday, February 19, 2010

## Magellan creates 'dashboard' to track quality of behavioral care

Phoenix Business Journal - by [Patrick O'Grady](#)

In a world where patient outcomes are increasingly becoming the model for judging behavioral health care, **Magellan Health Services** and the Arizona Department of Health Services are using technology to examine the care provided by Valley clinics.

Magellan has launched an outcomes "dashboard" for the 25 clinics in the Valley to demonstrate how the region as a whole is serving the roughly 20,000 behavioral health cases that go through the system each year.

"You have to step back and see how the system is working for a majority of the people," said Dr. Laura Nelson, acting deputy director of ADHS and the Division of Behavioral Health Services.

The dashboard developed by Magellan as part of the state behavioral health contract the company has held since 2007 is a snapshot of specific monthly outcomes, from finding people employment to dealing with court-ordered treatment.

It can be viewed as a whole or by subgroups. Those groups are broken down into the four community organizations that run the clinics to see how each group is performing to comparing each all the way down to the clinic level.

The information is not new. Magellan and clinic operators have received reams of paperwork ranging from claims processed by Magellan to medical records, but found it difficult to compile it into a usable format. The dashboard, which distills the data using speedometer-style gauges to indicate how each clinic is performing, is a positive step, said David Covington, Magellan's chief of adult services.

"This dashboard is designed to focus on outcomes rather than process," he said.

Clinics started inputting data last March, and the system became fully operational in December. Covington said there has been steady improvement since the launch, and

the clinic operators can see firsthand how their efforts to change have moved the needle.

Another goal is to make the information regarding behavioral health as transparent as possible. Some of the outcomes are good and others are not, but ADHS wants to help people to make informed decisions about where they seek care, Nelson said.

“We’re not highlighting things that are perfect, by any means,” she said. “We’re saying, ‘Here’s where we are.’”

The system is a way to help people see what is going on with the clinics, said Jeff Boldizar, deputy CEO of Magellan.

“This really does redefine some of the noise out there about whether this is a system in crisis or transformation,” he said.

The system now only looks at monthly data, which it will build upon as clinics update the dashboard. Covington said the hope is to have it track daily input and be able to focus on treatment outcomes from programs at individual clinics.

Magellan also is working with five other states to develop similar dashboards, and is exploring it for a number of agencies in Arizona, Covington said.